



# TRANSPORTATION PERFORMANCE AUDIT BOARD

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To: House Transportation Committee  
Senate Transportation Committee  
Legislative Transportation Committee

From: Doug Hurley, Chair 

Date: January 27, 2005

Subject: Final Report — Department of Transportation Highways and Ferries Programs  
Performance Measure Review

Assessing the Performance Measurement Systems of several key transportation agencies was the first assignment the Washington State Legislature (the Legislature) gave to the Transportation Performance Audit Board (TPAB). The largest of the agencies whose Performance Measurement System was to be reviewed is the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). This letter summarizes that review.

The statements in this letter are based on a number of sources and experiences. First, we have heard reports on several occasions from WSDOT staff on the status of their performance measurement and benchmark systems. Second, we have had access to the WSDOT's Gray Notebook and the materials on the WSDOT Accountability website. Third, as a body of citizens with transportation experience and legislators with experience overseeing transportation, we bring perceptions and experiences from those external activities consistent with the legislation that appointed us. Fourth, we contracted with a consultant to conduct a Performance Measurement Review whose report we have read, challenged, and been challenged by.

From the multiple sources referenced above, we have findings that assess both the evolving progress of WSDOT's performance measurement system, and, to a limited degree, point to substantive issues that the current performance reports bring to the surface.

Please note that, unless otherwise specified, page references below refer to the consultant's report which, because of its size, is not included in this document. This letter, its attachments, the complete consultant's report, and WSDOT's comments are available online on the [TPAB audit web site](#).

## BACKGROUND

1. In November 2000, the Governor-appointed Blue Ribbon Commission on Transportation's (BRCT) Benchmark Committee published its final report for Washington State. The report recommended eleven benchmarks for Washington's transportation system and a set of topics for additional benchmarks for future development.
2. In January 2001, the Washington State Transportation Commission analyzed the application of the BRCT benchmarks, and agreed to pursue the development of a performance measurement program for WSDOT. The appointment of Doug MacDonald as the new Secretary of Transportation in April 2001 reinforced this direction.

3. In October 2001, the Transportation Commission formed a Benchmark Committee to develop and guide the use of benchmarks for WSDOT, working with the new Secretary and WSDOT staff. The committee proceeded to develop and implement benchmarks and performance measures for the major policy categories recommended by the BRCT.
4. Beginning in May 2001, WSDOT has published policy goal benchmarks on a quarterly basis in "Measures, Markers, and Mileposts," commonly referred to as the "Gray Notebook," on the [WSDOT accountability web page](#).
5. In January 2002, the Legislature passed ESHB 2304. Codified as RCW 47.01.012 in July 2002, the legislation established transportation benchmark categories and directed the Washington State Transportation Commission to act as a single point of contact to "establish performance measures to ensure transportation system performance at local, regional, and state government levels."
6. On August 20, 2003, in accordance with the categories established by the Legislature, the Washington State Transportation Commission adopted a set of benchmarks for measuring the performance of the state's transportation system. These benchmarks are summarized in the ["Transportation Benchmarks Implementation Report"](#) on the WSDOT web site.
7. In 2003, the Legislature created the TPAB, and in RCW 44.75.070, established criteria for performance measurement reviews to be conducted by TPAB. Consistent with those criteria, in reviewing WSDOT, TPAB asked the consultant to address the following questions:
  - Have the Legislature and the Transportation Commission established clear mandates, strategic plans, mission statements, and goals and objectives?
  - Are the performance and outcome measures of WSDOT's Highways and Ferries programs consistent with legislative mandates, Transportation Commission policies, strategic plans, mission statements, and goals and objectives?
  - Have the WSDOT's Highways and Ferries programs established clear performance benchmarks and/or standards for assessing overall performance of the WSDOT?
  - How are WSDOT's management and the Transportation Commission using performance measurement data to improve WSDOT's organization, budget planning, and allocation of resources?
  - Are WSDOT's current reporting requirements contributing to the efficiency of the Department and are they cost effective?
  - Are the "Gray Notebook" and associated quarterly reports to the Transportation Commission meaningful, cost effective tools?
  - Are WSDOT's reports being utilized by their targeted user groups?
  - How are the WSDOT's Highways and Ferries programs using performance and outcome measures to manage resources in an efficient and effective manner?
  - What performance benchmarks have been used in other states to measure the performance of transportation agencies? How do they compare with those used by WSDOT?
  - Is WSDOT's information technology capability adequate to provide management information necessary to monitor performance data?

## FINDINGS

### WSDOT's Evolving Performance Measurement System

1. TPAB finds, in accordance with the report from the consultant, that under the leadership of Secretary Doug MacDonald, the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) has established and is in the process of implementing an effective system of performance measurement to manage and provide accountability for delivery of products of services. TPAB notes that, had we conducted this review four years ago, there would have been virtually no systematic performance measurement system to assess. The fact that such a system has been put in place in such a short time in an organization of the size and complexity of WSDOT is a remarkable accomplishment in itself and deserves to be recognized.
2. TPAB finds, in accordance with the information provided by our consultant and staff observation of WSDOT's leadership role in the Transportation Research Board's 2004 "Second National Conference on Performance Measures to Improve Transportation Systems," that WSDOT's implementation of performance measurement compares favorably to best practices utilized in other states' Departments of Transportation.
3. TPAB finds, in accordance with the information provided by our consultant and personal observation, that WSDOT uses performance measures to "provide leadership, set direction, establish a performance-oriented culture, and ensure manager accountability in a highly effective way." Managers know what measures are measured, what management expects, and actively express awareness of the measurements as key issues that effect the way they operate. Examples from the consultant's report include:
  - a. The Performance Appraisal System — (page 18) *"From the top down, WSDOT managers establish performance plans with their direct reports. These performance plans specify performance goals, objectives, performance measures, strategies, and actions to accomplish them. With the recent civil service reform and the implementation of the state's new human resource management system, WSDOT is instituting a new employee performance and appraisal system that will align employee performance management with WSDOT's performance measurement system."*
  - b. Project Delivery Meetings — (page 37) *"WSDOT conducts quarterly project delivery meetings that involve senior management meeting in each region with the respective project engineers for project status reports. These meetings identify leadership interventions that can be taken to address project risks. Their agenda is driven by project status against performance measures reported in the Gray Notebook."*
4. TPAB finds, in accordance with the information provided by our consultant, WSDOT staff presentations, and personal observation that the performance measurement system is still evolving and has achieved different levels of completion in different areas. In some cases, implementation is very complete. "Across all major program areas, measurement is in place to track the delivery of products and services." (pages E-4, 27)
  - a. Project Delivery (Page 25) — *"The emphasis in WSDOT's performance measurement system is on providing accountability for the delivery of agreed products and services. For example, the Gray Notebook beginning with the 10th edition provides detail on a project by project basis for projects funded under the 2003 Transportation Funding Package. In addition, at the project level, individual project detail is now provided at the WSDOT Web site. This is reinforced by the personnel performance management system by which, from the top down in the organization, managers' performance plans, the delivery of products and services in budget and on schedule."*

- b. Project Delivery (page 37) — *“Project specific performance measurement provides very direct accountability across the organization. Region administrators, through their performance plans, are directly accountable for the on schedule delivery of projects. Region administrators’ direct reports have similarly clear delivery expectations in their performance plans.”*
  - c. Effective Measurement (Page 32) — *“Program area managers responsible for pavement management, bridge management, safety, and other programs use performance measurement intensively at WSDOT. In each of these areas, there is a sophisticated use of data for the management analysis of how specific improvements meet overall program objectives. For example, pavement performance objectives are tracked and assessed at the system and technical analysis defines the types of pavement improvement that will provide the most cost effective way for preserving the system.”*
  - d. Improvement Suggested (Page 53) — *“Equipment and facilities offices are in different stages of developing performance measuring systems. The equipment and facilities office uses many performance measures to determine equipment utilization and delivery of facilities but there are no goals specified from which to assess effectiveness.”* The report went on to identify specific areas where improvement was indicated. WSDOT has reviewed and concurs with this finding as a needed area of improvement.
5. TPAB finds, in accordance with the information provided by our consultant, that WSDOT and WSF management are using performance measures to manage resources and improve services to customers.
- a. (Page 42) — Highway Maintenance — *“The use of performance measurement to manage and report on effectiveness is well developed for highway maintenance through MAP and is consistent with WSDOT Strategic Plan.”*
  - b. (Page 70) — Ferry Terminal Scheduling — *“Performance measures are used extensively throughout the management process of scheduling terminal staff.”*
  - c. (Page 72) — Ferry Maintenance — *“WSF’s new maintenance management system is improving the measurement of efficiency, i.e. the inventory and labor required to accomplish maintenance jobs. Over time, the maintenance management system should also generate the data required to improve effectiveness, i.e. the number and frequency of jobs that must be done.”*

### **Mandates, Benchmarks, & Measures**

TPAB finds that WSDOT has taken the issue of performance measurement and benchmark development very seriously. The most public evidence of this is in the publication of the Gray Notebook. Another indication is in the considerable attention given to the detailed development of benchmarks. As noted above, the Benchmarks Implementation Report can be found online on WSDOT’s web site. It provides a thoughtful and detailed discussion of the various benchmarks proposed by the Blue Ribbon Commission and adopted by the Legislature, the appropriateness of some, the awkwardness of others, and describes the efforts being made by WSDOT to improve upon both the content of and the measurement of benchmarks.

TPAB finds that legislative mandates appear throughout transportation legislation. There appears to be an evolving effort to align instructions from these multiple sources with the benchmarks, business plans and budgets of the agency. Although there is significant emphasis on benchmarking and performance measurement, state government can make significant improvements in aligning the planning and budgeting process with benchmarking and performance management, likely making it more efficient and less time-consuming. Differing

formats and overlaps in information often result in duplication of effort and a need to manipulate data in order to make it "fit" a particular planning or reporting requirement.

TPAB finds, as a result of the review, the consultant's report, and the related discussions, that benchmarks and performance measures are iterative and must continue to evolve over time. WSDOT and the Transportation Commission have initiated a process for establishing and identifying benchmarks. As benchmarks and measures that more accurately reflect the state of the transportation system are discovered, WSDOT, the Transportation Commission and the Legislature should have a common and cohesive system for revising them.

Transportation benchmarks have developed to the point that there is a basis for them to evolve in several areas including roadway conditions, safety, congestion, air quality, and cost effectiveness. In air quality, we note that the benchmarks address traditional pollutants, but could be expanded to include carbon dioxide and diesel particulates. In congestion, although difficult, ways to assess the congestion condition and the contribution to its relief made by different transportation tools can be developed further. In roadway conditions, WSDOT has found, and TPAB concurs, that disaggregating road condition information by type of road has improved the policy utility of the benchmark. Similar disaggregation has helped in safety. The Blue Ribbon Commission did not suggest specific cost effectiveness measures, but noted the need for them to be developed. The evolving skill of WSDOT's performance measurement efforts will allow the agency to address cost effectiveness measures successfully in the future.

One of the difficulties in establishing benchmarks and measures is that an agency can be judged against established benchmarks and measures for which it has not been adequately funded. Likewise, in agencies with long-term capital programs, decisions about policy involve measuring and predicting future conditions. Benchmarks that measure only the present have limited value to support such long-term policy development.

### **Communications to Internal and External Customers**

Compared to information available several years ago, WSDOT now captures and generates a vast amount of performance and accountability data in printed and electronic form. Internally, the information is used effectively throughout the management cycle as described in the Dye report on page E-7. *"The reports are a cost-effective mechanism for reporting on WSDOT activities. The Gray Notebook incorporates measurement and other information from WSDOT's management and oversight processes. The reports, particularly those regarding project performance, are used by the commission to provide oversight and ensure accountability.... with regard to internal WSDOT uses and by the commission. The commission uses the reports and finds them extremely valuable."*

The process of preparing a Gray Notebook for publication also serves as an opportunity within the agency for managers and employees to meet and discuss performance measures and their importance, and to reinforce them as part of the agency culture.

Reports are also used by managers as a focus for discussion and policy emphasis. (Page 50) *"...managers interviewed in the regions indicated that maintenance employees are addressing safety concerns and this is resulting in fewer accidents. Regions report on their accountability scorecards the number and cause of accidents on a semi-annual basis. These reports include historical data and expected targets on reportable injuries by year. For example, the south central region reported through June 2004, 23 reportable injuries compared to the state average of twenty-five in a six month period."*

The external focus of WSDOT's communications effort is primarily through the quarterly "Gray Notebook" and the WSDOT web site's accountability page. In the Gray Notebook and on the web, as opposed to raw data that tells "what is", WSDOT emphasizes using the data to "tell a story" and explain "why it is," making the information more tangible to the public. WSDOT's efforts in this area were recently highlighted at the Transportation Research Board's 2004 "Second National Conference on Performance Measures to Improve Transportation Systems."

While WSDOT's performance measurement data is indexed in reasonably adequate ways, its sheer volume and complexity creates communication challenges. Opinion leaders or policy makers may not always be able to easily find what they are looking for, but it is usually not for a lack of information. In response to comments that the Gray Notebook provides too much information, WSDOT has already created a condensed version, the "Gray Notebook Lite," intended as a more accessible and easy-to-read resource. Although available only in printed form at the time of the review, WSDOT has now deployed the Gray Notebook Lite on the WSDOT web site.

WSDOT's communication efforts are heavily dependent on data input to and stored on the agency's information technology systems. Where these fall short (see below) the time and effort required to manipulate the data to communicate it, and the resulting chance of error, are magnified.

In addition to the Gray Notebook and the accountability web site, at the time of the review, WSDOT was required to produce more than 80 reports for outside entities, including the Legislature and, to a large extent, the federal government. These reports are highlighted on page 21 and 22 of the consultant report. In addition, a summary of those reporting requirements prepared for TPAB by WSDOT is conveyed to the Legislature along with the consultant report, and is available online [here](#).

## **Institutional Issues**

### Information Technology

Performance measurement systems rely on a level of data development, management, and analysis that is far more intensive than traditional governmental reporting techniques. As a result, the adequacy and timeliness of information technology systems plays a pivotal role in the quality of the performance measurement system and its usefulness to internal and external customers. WSDOT recognizes the limitations their systems place on the performance management process and has requested assistance in upgrading and replacing them. In the 2003-05 Transportation budget, the Legislature recognized the need to improve WSDOT's legacy systems and appropriated funds for a strategic assessment of WSDOT's IT systems. Unfortunately, the Legislature could not agree on the department's proposal to begin the assessment process, and the study did not take place.

If WSDOT is to depend on accurate and timely performance data to drive its management decisions and priorities, the data design, software applications, business rules, and computer hardware should support, and not hinder, the process. TPAB finds WSDOT is doing an impressive job with what it has to work with, but limitations in the systems make the process extremely inefficient and require too much manual manipulation of data to achieve the results. Such hand work also provides the opportunity for errors and for those errors to be carried forward and affect other data.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Mandates, Benchmarks, and Measures**

TPAB recommends the current edition of the Washington Transportation Plan be used (1) to organize all potential mandates as stated in various pieces of transportation legislation and connect them to the legislatively mandated benchmark categories, (2) to review, adjust, and improve the benchmarks, and (3) to communicate the results as the overarching performance goals of the Washington State transportation system.

We recommend that WSDOT's performance measures be organized under the benchmark categories they support. If relevant measures are discovered that do not support an existing benchmark, such discovery should precipitate development of a new general benchmark, or call the measures' usefulness into question.

We recommend that the WSDOT staff, the Transportation Commission and the Legislature align the budgeting process to the benchmarks so that the Legislature is consciously "buying" given levels of accomplishment.

- WSDOT and the other implementation agencies in the transportation system cannot be held responsible for doing that which they are not funded to do. We recommend that WSDOT and the Legislature consider adopting "revenue adequacy" benchmarks so that it becomes clear "how much" performance has been and will be achieved at given investment levels.
- We recommend that the benchmarking process develop a "predicted future" component to assist in supporting long-term policy and capital project development.
- We recommend that benchmarks and measures develop a "cost-effectiveness" component. This is an area that is of high interest to the public and could be a useful communication tool.

TPAB recommends benchmarks and measures evolve in several areas including roadway conditions, safety, congestion, and air quality. In air quality, we recommend expanding the benchmark list of pollutants to include non-traditional pollutants such as carbon dioxide and diesel particulates. In congestion, we recommend further development of measures to assess the congestion condition and the contribution to its relief made by different transportation tools. Where appropriate, we recommend continuing the disaggregation of benchmark information to improve its utility.

### **Communicating Accountability and Performance Measurement**

As noted above, WSDOT is considered a national leader in its communication of information. Given the excellent data that has been developed and WSDOT's commitment to accountability, TPAB concurs in the final report's Recommendation #3 related to communication of performance related information, and recommends that WSDOT continue to seek ways to make its performance data more accessible to policy makers and the public. In doing so, however, we do not recommend WSDOT compromise the quality of the Gray Notebook, only seek ways to improve its usability.

TPAB recommends that the annual reporting of benchmarks by WSDOT, currently in the July Gray Notebook, also be pulled out and presented as a stand alone report with broad public dissemination. To be effective, it will need to be done as is the Gray Notebook in general, as a story telling device. A key to its effectiveness will be the provision of trend lines of performance over time.

### **Institutional Recommendations**

#### Information Technology

The TPAB concurs in Recommendation #4 as relates to WSDOT's information technology infrastructure and systems. TPAB recommends the Legislature again approve and fund a strategic assessment study of WSDOT's IT systems, and further recommends that the agency work closely with select transportation committee members and staff to address concerns that blocked the process in the past.

#### The Governor and OFM, the Legislature, the Transportation Commission and WSDOT

Benchmarks and performance measures are well and good as long as they are part of the natural organic life of not only WSDOT itself, but also the agencies that oversee WSDOT. Legislative bodies may well pass laws that require benchmarks and performance measures, but as the late Seattle City Councilmember Sam Smith said of his nine-member body to staffers who pressed policy objections to his proposals, "Five votes make policy." And so it should be in a representative democracy.

The tension between “five votes” and the rational imperatives of benchmarks, performance measures, Priorities of Government (POG) and the like is inevitable. However, in learning that TPAB was the 82nd reporting requirement for the WSDOT, we were struck by the sheer volume of the reporting. Later, we learned more about POG, the Strategic Business Plan of the department, and the budget process, as well as benchmarks and performance measures. We have not found many who could easily explain to us how all these fit together in a system.

It is important that reporting requirements not become a complex web of paperwork independent of useful and relevant policy making information. TPAB encourages the incoming Governor, the Director of OFM, legislative leaders, the Transportation Commission, and WSDOT to streamline and consolidate these requirements into a slim, clear, linear system and discard the remaining requirements that do not contribute to the system.

## **SUBSTANTIVE OBSERVATIONS**

While this study was about the system, not the content of the performance measures, TPAB learned some things along the way that we believe should be called out. Those observations include:

### **Preservation**

The power of good performance measurement data is perhaps shown no more clearly than in the information provided on pavement conditions. [Attachment A](#) to this letter contains the 4th quarter 2003 summary of pavement conditions from pages 39-41 of the December 31, 2003 Gray Notebook.

A portrait of significant progress from the early 1970's to the present is provided. However, a chronic 9% plus of total roadway miles are in “poor condition” compared to a legislative benchmark goal of zero. This summary draws particular attention to the deteriorating condition of the Interstate Highway lane miles, which were originally built with Portland Concrete Cement (PCC). As the report says, *“The PCC pavements are 13 percent of the lane miles, yet carry 23 percent of the traffic. PCC pavements have longer lives than other pavements, but are very costly to rehabilitate, not only in terms of construction money but also in traveler inconvenience from traffic restrictions when pavement work is performed, especially on the major high traffic corridors.”*

*Forthcoming replacement of these pavements will bring big challenges involving funding, engineering and traffic management during construction (see the discussion on PCC pavements later in this section). The state is fast approaching the need to reckon with this looming financial and traffic crisis in pavement management, a story that is not fully revealed by the generally positive picture conveyed by the recent annual surveys of “poor” condition pavements for the entire highway system.”*

What the report does not say is that statewide prioritization of preservation dollars has tended to export urban preservation dollars to the rural systems, a transfer that has been possible thanks to the long life of PCC pavements in the urban areas and the high revenue yields of the urban areas. A draft WSDOT chart illustrating that funding pattern is provided as [Attachment B](#).

A critical policy issue for WSDOT's prioritization policies will be the inevitable funding competition as urban area PCC needs rise to the surface. This is made all the more evident as the original '05-'07 funding chart showed zero funding for PCC pavements. That was amended by the nickel package, but not sufficiently to solve the PCC problem. Two problems emerge. One, how did a generally good prioritization system yield a zero funding scenario for PCC preservation and how should that system be amended to avoid systematic exclusion of given pavement types? Second, given a funding climate in which new revenues are hard to come by, how should budgeting decisions be made so that critical PCC lane miles carrying 23% of the state's travel miles get the dollars they need without doing damage to other roadways?



What seems to be lacking here is an overall asset management funding system that takes into account the life-cycles of the various pavement types and structures and sets aside a preservation reserve fund to efficiently replace worn out assets. Without such a system it is impossible to determine the long-term financial impact of adding new assets to the system while underfunding preservation of existing assets. Such a system of funding is typical in the utility industry and unheard of in the transportation industry. However, at least establishing the accounting system would provide policy information as to the advisability of adding new assets while existing assets are in need of replacement.

## **The Importance of Productivity Tools in Reducing Congestion**

Peak hour congestion is an issue in several areas of the state and is especially pressing in Puget Sound. The large investments proposed for both highway capacity and transit system expansion can tend to overwhelm important smaller and cheaper tools which can be very helpful. The Gray Notebooks provide evidence of the importance of several of these tools.

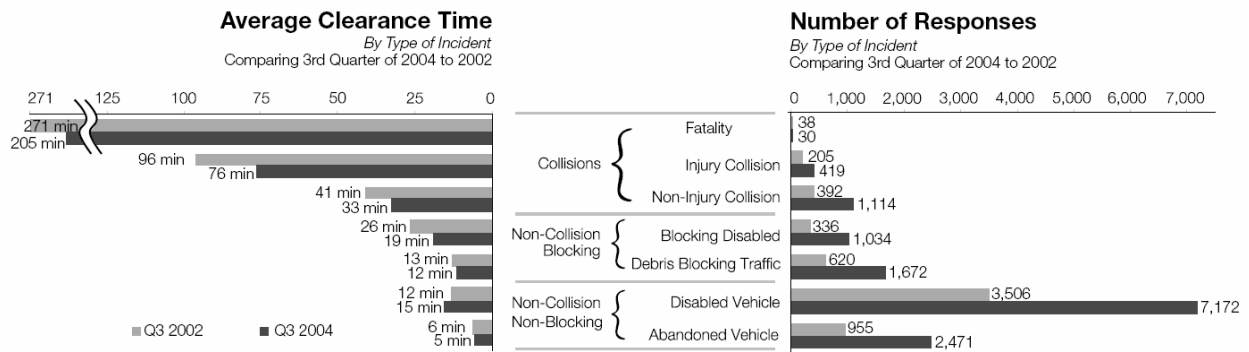
- Van Pools — Gray Notebook, Edition 15, p. 68, September 30, 2004: *"Increasing the number of vans on the road creates efficiencies because high occupancy vehicles reduce the number of vehicles traveling during peak traffic hours. Vanpool passenger miles as a share of total vehicle miles traveled (VMT) is an indicator of the magnitude of this effect. In the Puget Sound Region, vehicles travel nearly 80 million miles per day. Vanpool passenger miles are 0.8 percent of daily VMT, a relatively small percent. During both the morning and evening peak periods, vehicles travel slightly more than 14 million miles. During these peak travel times vanpool passenger miles represent 2.4 percent VMT. In the June 30, 2001 Gray Notebook, WSDOT noted that vanpool passenger miles represented nearly two percent of peak VMT in 1998. While VMT in the region has increased since 1998, vanpool passenger miles are increasing more rapidly. The significance of vanpooling is accentuated, as these vehicles typically travel on the major congested highways in the region.*

*Another way to assess vanpooling's effect on system efficiency is to focus on congested corridors. There are 274 vans that operate on the I-405 corridor (20 percent of the vanpools operating in the region). These vehicles carry over 3,000 passengers each peak period."*

- Incident Response Management — A significant amount of congestion is caused by roadway incidents ranging from abandoned vehicles to fatality collisions. In 2002, WSDOT and WSP adopted a joint performance goal, *"WSDOT and WSP will collaborate to respond to incidents and coordinate all public and private resources in this effort to work toward clearing incidents within 90 minutes."* Since then, significant progress has been made as illustrated in Gray Notebook, Edition 15, p. 58, September 30, 2004:

### *"Response Comparisons — 2002 and 2004*

*The chart below compares incident response types with average clearances times for July - September 2002 to July - September 2004. Since 2002, the number of responses has increased in all categories except fatal collisions (38 in quarter 3, 2002 and 30 in quarter 3, 2004). The least common types of incidents are the most time consuming to clear. Clearance times for all types of incidents have remained steady or decreased (the slight increase in the non-blocking disabled vehicle category is not part of an increasing trend over the two years.) During quarter 3, 2004 there were more disabled or abandoned vehicles on the roadside (i.e., not directly blocking travel lanes) than any other type of incidents. The charts categorize data in "primary" incident types only. All incidents are divided into these seven categories."*



**Ramp Metering** — Ramp metering has been installed in many locations to help improve the flow of traffic. A dramatic example of its effect on SR 520 was provided on p. 51 of the Sept. 30, 2004 Gray Notebook and is included in [Attachment C](#).

- **Spot Improvements** — Similarly, relatively inexpensive spot improvements can alleviate some bottlenecks. An example of a classic bottleneck was the awkward merger of Southbound I-405 traffic onto SR 167, the backup queue for which often extended hundreds of yards or longer back into the mainline of I-405, thus effectively turning a freeway lane into a parking lot. The before and after story for this improvement was told on p. 52 of the September 30, 2004 Gray Notebook and is also included in [Attachment D](#).

## Safety

The March 2004 Gray Notebook, p. 30, reminds us of the profound importance of safety on our roadways. We lost 601 people in motor vehicle accidents in 2003. The estimated societal cost of all statewide accidents was \$5.6 billion in 2002, *"about \$930 for every man, woman and child in the state."* These would be staggering numbers standing alone, but they also represent a remarkable amount of progress and place Washington among the best states in terms of lowest number of vehicular deaths per capita. The 601 deaths continue a decline in motor vehicle fatalities that has been going on since the mid-1980's and represents the lowest number for a single year since 1961. But despite the progress, the deaths and the costs remain significant, reminding us that safety must remain a central consideration in transportation policy making.

Preservation, productivity, and safety are only a few of the many lessons available from the performance measures in the Gray Notebook. As these efforts evolve and mature they will provide an unavoidable source of data for policy makers trying to improve Washington's transportation system.

I would appreciate your feedback or discussion about our report. If you or your staff have questions about this letter or the report, please feel free to contact me directly, or Nate Naismith at LTC, (360) 786-7327.

cc: Doug MacDonald, WSDOT Secretary  
Paula Hammond, WSDOT Chief of Staff  
Victor Moore, Office of Financial Management Director  
TPAB Members

Attachment